Wildlife Diversity News

A Publication of the Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Program

News from the Frog Pond

It is finally spring and we are beginning to get out into the field to collect data on Iowa's many diverse species. As usual, the Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Program is super busy with staff running all over the state giving talks, collecting data, and assisting with diversity wherever we can.

Did you know that the Department of Transportation began replacing all license plates over 15 years old last year? All plates purchased prior to 2004 are on track to be replaced by 2014, with all plates purchased after 2004 to be replaced every 10 years. We have heard that some people who had REAP (Resource Enhancement and Protection) plates previously did not receive a REAP replacement plate as expected and had to go to the County Office to exchange their plate. We know DOT is working hard to fix these errors and if you are one of the people this has impacted, please know how much we appreciate your support for Natural Resources and our program. We are very grateful for all REAP plate owners but understand that some of you have had to go above and beyond to maintain your plates these last two years—thank you for your efforts.

- Karen Kinkead
WDP Coordinator

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22% of the original purchase price and 60% of the renewal fee for natural resource license plates go directly to the Wildlife Diversity Program.

Rare Butterflies in Iowa

Leonard's Skipper. Photo by Mike Reese of wisconsinbutterflies.org

One of my favorite groups of Iowa wildlife reminds me of bulldogs…bulldogs with wings. They're fuzzy and stout, can be territorial, and have a fierce attitude when cornered. The critters I'm describing are skippers, an often overlooked but charming member of the butterfly family. Though relatively obscure, skippers are actually a very diverse group, accounting for 46 of roughly 130 species of Iowa butterflies. They use many different habitats (wetland, prairie, woodland) and most species appear to be very tightly linked to the habitat in which they are found.

This dependence on a very specific habitat has contributed to their relative rarity. Over half of the 38 butterfly species designated as Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Iowa are skippers, and fully one-third of these are skippers associated with our native prairie. Two such species are Ottoe (*Hesperia ottoe*) and Leonard's (*Hesperia leonardus pawnee* and *H.l. leonardus)* skippers. Both of these species are found only in xeric short to mid-grass prairie, such as that found along gravelly ridgetops in the Loess Hills or in dry glade openings in Northeast Iowa.

Both Leonard's and Ottoe skippers are in decline across their range, with Ottoe's being of particular concern. There are a lot of unanswered questions about these species and the reasons for their declines. Many butterfly species are limited because their caterpillar host plants are rare, but that does not seem to be the case for these skippers: their caterpillars feed on Little Bluestem, Sideoats Grama and Switchgrass, all abundant prairie species. Why, then, do Leonard's and Ottoe skippers not venture outside of dry glades and ridgetops? Male Ottoes are often seen using Pale Purple Coneflower, which extends high above the surrounding vegetation in the dry prairie, as perch spots from which to launch patrols for females and to chase off other males. Could it be just this vagary of vegetation structure that keeps the Ottoe from spreading out further into the more abundant mesic prairie?

Ottoe Skipper. Photo by Mike Reese of wisconsinbutterflies.org

Beginning this summer, we hope to begin to answer some of the pressing questions surrounding these small and feisty creatures. The first order of business will be simply figuring out where these species still exist in Iowa and collecting detailed habitat information about those spots. Greater knowledge of the distribution and habitat restrictions of these quickly declining species will help us manage more effectively to prevent their disappearance from Iowa. Our hope this summer is to initiate a pilot study focused in the Northeast Iowa portion of these species' range.

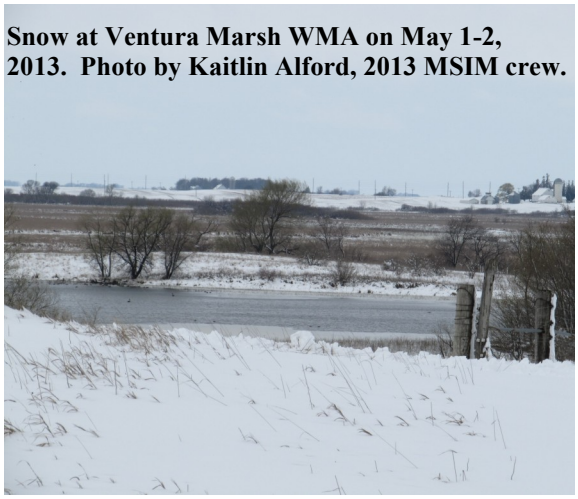
- Stephanie Shepherd,
WDP Biologist
- Katy Patterson,
AmeriCorps Member

2013 MSIM Season Underway

The 2013 Multiple Species Inventory and Monitoring (MSIM) Program field season started on April 1 this year with a 4-day workshop at the Boone Wildlife Research Station. Five crews funded through the USFWS State Wildlife Grants Program are inventorying 75 public properties across Iowa. One crew, funded by the USFWS National Refuge System is focused on Port Louisa NWR and Lake Odessa WMA with an additional crew funded through the US Army Corps of Engineers working around Saylorville Lake. In all, 32 seasonal technicians have been employed by Iowa State University to collect data on birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, fish, mussels, dragonflies, and butterflies.

The weather has been a bit of a hindrance to date with several properties along the rivers inaccessible due to flooding and some days of field work missed due to snow.

Crew members report their favorite species found each week and in the last month, those lists have included Eastern Bluebirds, Green Herons, Ornate Box Turtles, Otters, Red Fox, and Northern Leopard Frogs just to name a few. Crews will conduct surveys for birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and odonates.



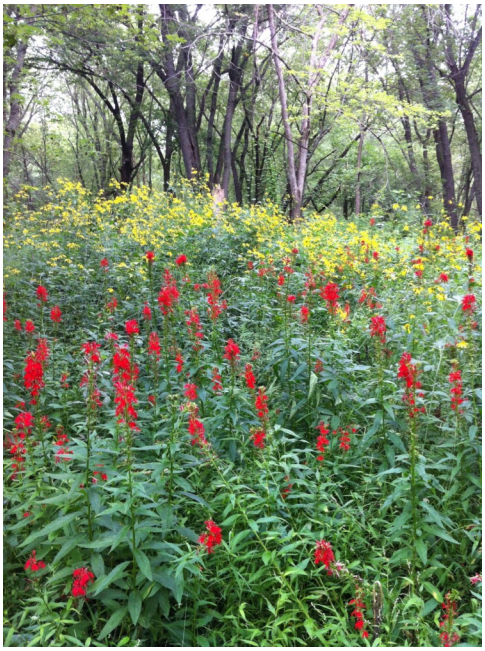
Snow at Ventura Marsh WMA on May 1-2, 2013. Photo by Kaitlin Alford, 2013 MSIM crew.

In late May we will begin to survey for butterflies, with mussel and fish surveys to begin in July or August depending on river levels. During August, crews will also begin collecting habitat data for use as covariates in our data analyses.

By October of this year, the MSIM program will have collected data in every one of Iowa's 99 counties. During 2014 we will only be surveying those properties assigned to our annual category (26 properties in 25 counties across Iowa). The remainder of 2014 will be focused on analyzing data and critically reviewing the MSIM program with an eye toward the future.

- Karen Kinkead,
WD Program Coordinator

Blanding's Turtle photo by Paul Frese, DNR Technician 2013.



Diversity Dispatch

Breaking News in the Wide World of Wildlife

Mangarahar Chiclid Extinction?

The London Zoo is home to the 2 of the last known 3 individuals of the Mangarahara Chiclid, a tropical fish from the Mangarahara River in Madagascar, but all three are male.

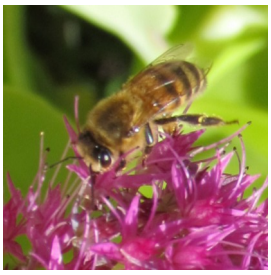
The fish's habitat on the river has been destroyed through the building of dams so captivity is currently the species only chance at survival. The Zoo is searching for private aquarium owners to contact them if they believe they may have a female of the species.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2013/may/10/london-zoo-appeal-tropical-fish

US Report Cites Variety of Factors in Bee Colony Collapse

The USDA and EPA have determined that there are a variety of factors causing bee colony declines and collapses, not solely neonicotinoid pesticides. Many have called for a ban on such pesticides, including the European Union which just approved a 2-year ban on the pesticides. The US report lists mites, viruses, bacteria, poor nutrition, and genetics in addition to pesticides as the reasons bee populations and colonies are declining in the US.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2013/may/02/us-bee-report-pesticide-eu



Honeybee photo by Tom Litchfield, DNR Biologist

The Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines Iowa has 2 Eastern Black Rhinoceros. Visit www.blankparkzoo.com for more information.

Rhino Horn Worth Weight in Gold

In Vietnam, posters are being placed in advertising areas informing people that Rhinoceros horns are made of the same substance found in human fingernails. The reason? Vietnam is one of the countries most responsible for the increase in illegal poaching of rhinos in South Africa. Some of the Vietnam populace believe that Rhino horn has the ability to treat cancer, cure hangovers, or act as an aphrodisiac. In reality, the horns are made of keratin, the same protein that makes human hair and nails.

http://allafrica.com/stories/201305161204.html

Florida Road Kills

US Highway 27 north of Tallahassee was the location of massive roadkills of reptiles and amphibians. The Depart. Of Transportation placed fencing along a 1200 meter stretch and intercepted almost 5,000 turtles before they were able to access the road. Several years and $3 million later, this stretch of roadway has been fixed to include plastic walls preventing reptiles and other small animals from accessing the road and funneling them into culverts that allow passage underneath the road. Across the US, it is estimated that 1 to 2 million animals are hit by vehicles each year, representing one collision every 26 seconds. This estimate only includes reported collisions. Most people don't report when they hit an animal but have no damage to the car (like a snake, turtle, or raccoon), so its thought that millions more are killed each year. Other methods to avoid collisions (warning signs, reduced speed limits, and roadside 'animal detection' systems which flash when large animals are present) have not been able to prevent as many collisions as over or underpasses designed for wildlife.

http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=roadkill-endangers-endangered-wildlife

For additional news stories on wildlife and related topics, visit: http://feeds.feedburner.com/TWSWildlifeNews

Teaming with Wildlife Update

For the last two years the Teaming With Wildlife Coalition's main goal has been simply to try to save the State Wildlife Grants program. This vital funding source for Wildlife Diversity related research, management and land protection has been under continual threat since it was slashed by 35% starting in 2011.

In early March, supporters from all over the country converged on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. to participate in the Teaming With Wildlife Fly In Days. For me, the Fly-in Days is a two day event that revolves mostly around meeting with Iowa's congressional representatives and providing them with the information they need to understand the prodigious accomplishments of the State Wildlife Grants program within Iowa. The representatives then must decide if this program is worth receiving a piece of the federal budgetary pie.

The primary way for Congressional representatives to demonstrate their support, is by signing on to a "Dear Colleague" Letter which advocates for robust funding for State Wildlife Grants and is sent to the members of the respective houses' appropriations committee. Both of Iowa's Senators and two out of the four of Iowa's House representatives signed onto the letter. Overall, 115 members of the House and 32 members of the U.S. Senate signed on in support of State Wildlife Grants which is an impressive display of support considering the budget anxieties that currently reign. Now, we wait to see if this positive showing will translate into funding for State Wildlife Grants in the FY14 federal budget.

For more information about Teaming with Wildlife and the State Wildlife Grants program visit www.teaming.com.

- Stephanie Shepherd,

The Teaming with Wildlife Coalition serves as a critical voice for Iowa's Wildlife, both at home and nationally.

House Finch Eye Disease Update

Wildlife Diversity Program members have recently received a number of reports, from around the state, of finches with swollen and matted eyes at bird feeders. To address citizens' concerns about these sick birds, it seems appropriate to provide an update about the disease affecting these birds and provide advice regarding actions citizens can take to reduce the spread of this disease.

House Finch Disease was first documented in eastern United States in 1993 and moved quickly across eastern United States and parts of Canada. Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Program documented cases of this disease in 50 counties by 1997. While infected birds have swollen eyes, the disease particularly affects the respiratory system. It is caused by the bacterium, *Mycoplasma gallisepticum,* which poses no threat to humans. As the name suggests, the disease mostly affects House Finches, but there have been a few documented cases of the disease in American Goldfinch, as well. Since birds concentrate at bird feeders, the risk of disease spread can especially increase during times when large numbers of this species are sharing the same feeding sites.

House Finch Disease Survey data, from the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, tell us that the disease has decreased from epidemic proportions and is now restricted to a smaller percentage of the population. It is estimated that 5% to 10% of the eastern House Finch population now has this disease but that the disease is no longer spreading dramatically; and the overall House Finch population is not at great risk from this disease. Current evidence suggests that infected birds do not acquire immunity to future infections, and there is no known cure for the disease. To slow the spread of this disease, one of the best preventive measures is to clean your feeders on a regular basis. We recommend using a mild bleach solution of one part bleach to nine parts water. Adding extra feeders to your yard can also slow down spread of the disease by eliminating overcrowding.

The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology continues to conduct a House Finch Disease Survey, providing an opportunity for citizens to help researchers track the spread of an infectious disease in a wildlife population. The survey is easy to do: participants watch their feeders, record the visits of House Finches and American Goldfinches, and the occurrence of disease symptoms. You can sign up on our web site, via email at housefinch@cornell.edu, or by calling (800) 843-BIRD. For information visit the House Finch Disease Survey web site.

- Bruce Ehresman,
WDP Biologist

Examples of House Finch Disease.

Iowa Whitetails: Spring Life (Part 4)

Spring has arrived and Iowa's deer are busy taking advantage of the flush of new growth to boost their nutritional intake after the winter months of shorter rations. Spring is a demanding time for deer nutritionally as their bodies are undergoing a lot of changes. All of the deer are in the process of shedding their winter coat and replacing it with the cooler "summer red" coat of thin hair. Bucks are growing their antlers and beginning to prepare their bodies for the fall breeding season. Younger deer are active in growing their bodies again after the winter slow down.

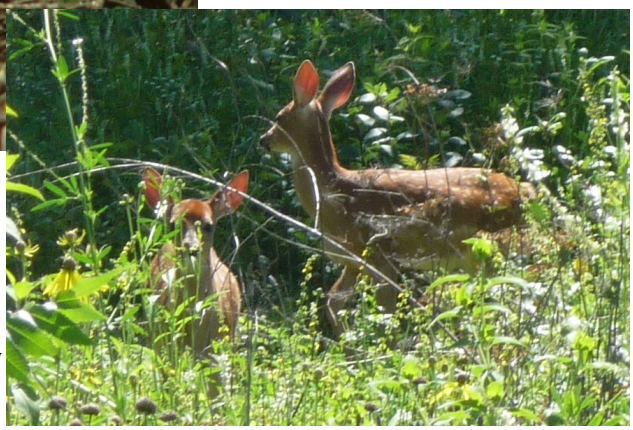
Pregnant does are nearing the end of their 200-day gestation period and the fetuses develop rapidly during the last several weeks. Most fawns are born in late May/early June and once born, place further demands on the does who produce rich milk for their young. For the first several weeks, the fawns utilize a hiding strategy to avoid predators and the doe only visits them a few times each day to nurse and groom her young.

Springtime also causes a change in deer social behavior. Family groups of does and last year's fawns that have been together for months, break up as pregnant does actively begin defending small fawn rearing territories against other deer in the best available habitat. This is a time when some of last year's fawns will disperse, seeking new places to live.

Bucks, in contrast, maintain bachelor groups throughout the spring and summer and, along with does who are not pregnant, tend to use lesser quality habitats that are not defended by pregnant does. However, deer of all sex and age groups can still be observed foraging in the larger prime feeding areas.

- Tom Litchfield,
DNR Wildlife Bureau Deer Biologist

The deer herds in over 80 percent of Iowa's counties are at or below their population goals. Photo courtesy of USFWS.



Deer. Photo by Ryan Rasmussen, MSIM Crew 2012.

Falcon River Field Trip Update

This year's Falcon River Trip offered two days of environmental outreach to schools in Allamakee County, and the Marquette and MacGregor school systems. Although rain and snowfall were predicted, it only rained most of the day. However, blustery, cold conditions did not allow the Maiden Voyage to take students onto the River. Consequently, the Harpers Ferry Community Center was converted into an environmental learning center for this year's Falcon River Trip. The center was divided into four learning stations.

In one of the sessions, Captain Robert Vavra presented a portion of his vast river knowledge. One area the students found most intriguing were the impressive collection of mussel shells that Robert included in his 20 minute talk. Although it was disappointing the River was not conducive for a cruise on Robert's boat, the students learned a lot about River lore.

Another learning station was staffed by an elder of the Ho-Chunk Nation, Mr. Bill Goodbear from Black River Falls, WI. Mr. Goodbear interpreted some of his native beliefs and customs to the youth. He keyed upon our national symbol, Bald Eagles, and shared some of his precious eagle feathers for the students' viewing.

Mr. Jarod Olson with Allamakee County Conservation Board brought along his collection of mammal hides. The students particularly enjoyed touching the fur from every mammal that had ever roamed the NE Iowa hillsides. The wolf hide was received with wide eyes all around. But it was the river otter, mink and raccoon hides that best represented the mammals of today's Mississippi River.

Dianne Moller from Hoos Woods Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, Milton, WI., accompanied the true star of the Falcon River Trip. The Peregrine Falcon was in immaculate feathered condition. Students were able to share the same space with this remarkable raptor. Periodically the falcon would open its long wings with dramatic results. The bird seemed to revel in the students' full attention being heaped upon it. A smaller cousin of the peregrine, a merlin, was also included. The students were able to learn about the scarcity of these woodland falcons in Iowa. A third raptor included for the students environmental education was a screech owl. Students learned there are two color phases of this bird: gray or rufous red.

The Friday evening Fish Fry was a huge success due to the assistance of Harpers Ferry Fire Department and numerous volunteers. An incredible meal of fish, salads, baked potatoes and onions was served. The dessert table of pies and cakes was out of this world and it was obvious these folks of Allamakee county have an innate ability to be incredible hosts. They really commit to making their Friday Night Fish Frys the best it can possibly be.

Local contributors that provided necessary funds for the Falcon River Trip included Kristi Sheldon of Harpers Ferry. As a member of American Legion Scenic Post 722 she encouraged members to contribute to the event. Likewise the Boosters Club contributed funds for the live birds program. The Allamakee County Conservation Board contributed as did the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. Ms. Sheldon also hosted Loren Zephier, Chief of the Dakota Nation and Mr. Goodbear of the Ho-Chunk Nation. THANK YOU to sponsoring organizations, and particularly Kristi Sheldon and Captain Robert Vavra for all their tireless efforts to ensure Peregrine Falcons fly freely from our generation to the next and the next, forever.

- Pat Schlarbaum, WDP Technician

Bill Goodbear, Kristi Sheldon, Loren Zephier, and Dianne Moller with falcon.

We will plan to celebrate next year's Falcon River Trip on May 3, 2014.

Species Spotlight—Eastern Mole

Eastern Mole captured by MSIM crew.

A much reviled destroyer of the precious emerald lawns of suburbia, the Eastern Mole (*Scalopus aquaticus*), spawned a small industry of methods for its own demise. I happen to like moles. Moles are a wonderful example of evolution working at its finest. Huge, shovel-like forelimbs, ultra-sensitive snout, pelage that flows in both forward and reverse, and tiny nearly useless eyes are the details that make a mole a mole.

My yard is infested with moles. Knowing they are just under the surface of my yard digging away while munching worms, grubs, and other fossorial creatures, doesn't bother me a bit. Yes, I do have a bouncy ride on the mower at times, but to me it is worth it. Occasionally, we get lucky and find a mole under a cover board. A quick grab with a gloved hand and you experience the true strength of a mole's digging apparatus. When placed on the ground, moles explode into a digging frenzy and disappear within a few seconds.

Iowa's Eastern Mole can be found throughout the state in grasslands, woodlands, yards, parks, and fields. As long as the soils are worthy of digging and not saturated, moles could live there. Eastern moles are the only species of mole found in Iowa. The star-nosed mole is found in nearby Wisconsin and Minnesota. To many a homeowner's horror, moles love a nice loamy lawn filled with worms and grubs. That is good digging! There are many ways to rid moles from a lawn, from poison peanuts to guillotine-like traps to buried fence, but none interest me. I'm happy to share my lawn with the moles, cottontails, snakes, worms, grubs, clover, and weeds. To know a mole is in your yard, you need only to look for the telltale raised tunnels of soil marking the path of a digging mole. Occasional eruptions of soil about the size of a small dinner plate can be seen as well. Gophers make larger mounds and do not make visible raised tunnels in the soil.

Eastern Mole in the author's yard.

With all that digging, the mole actually does a great deal of good for the soil. Nature's aerator you might say. Moles may take plenty of insect grubs as well. Fewer problem insects in the garden perhaps? Moles eat mostly earthworms, insects, other invertebrates, and some plant material. However, they do not dig through the garden munching on carrots and potatoes. To me they are a good thing for the land and I leave them alone.

A solitary species, moles spend much of their time digging away in shallow tunnels foraging for food. They do get together during the spring breeding season, after which the female mole has her litter of 2-5 young in a deep nest chamber lined with grass or leaves. The young do not leave the nest until nearly full grown. Moles are active year-round, day or night. When upper soil levels are frozen, moles head below the frost line and continue to dig, making deep loamy soils a favorite winter retreat.

Mammal predators such as foxes, coyotes, and domestic dogs take their share of moles, but seldom eat them. An unfavorable odor likely reduces the mole's palatability. Owls are known to take them as well. It remains a mystery how an owl captures such a fossorial creature!

Moles get a bad rap in my opinion. We've all probably seen their handiwork and maybe even got mad about it. Next time, think about all that cool action going on beneath your feet and give those moles a break!

- Paul Frese,
WDP Technician

The History of Peregrine Falcon Restoration in Iowa

Bob Anderson of the Raptor Research Project (who also developed the Decorah Eagle Camera website) came to Iowa from Minnesota with the intent of returning falcons to their natural cliffs. As a falconer, Bob had successfully bred adult falcons in captivity and produced numerous young eyases, or young falcons, for release around the Midwest. One of his Project's falcons successfully nested on a Minneapolis skyscraper in 1987. The Midwest falcon population rejuvenation increased as more and more young were successfully created, many through artificial insemination. Young 40 day-old falcon chicks were placed in many urban areas in America that learned to fly and obtain their own prey. However, as urban falcons increased, they were not spilling over onto the historic cliffs. In fact, urban territorial battles were experienced that concluded with the death or injuries to combatants.

Bob had a theory that fledgling falcons imprint upon their surroundings and the urban falcon population was indicative of that. Fierce battles occurred over urban nest sites on tall building ledges, boxes or alcoves. Yet there was a full array of natural cliffs that the urban peregrine population migrated through, but they did not pioneer onto native sites along the River. Bob relocated his project to Ridgeway, Iowa with the intent to create falcon eyases he would release in rock cliff sites along the Mississippi. At that time Iowa's Peregrine Falcon Recovery team united to assist and complement Bob's Raptor Resource Project. The Recovery Team was chaired by Lowell Washburn and included Maria Pearson with Yankton Nation, Pam Snowball and Bill Hall with Ho-Chunk Nation, private volunteers Kristi Sheldon and Tom Deckert, MidAmerican Energy Co., the National Park Service, and Iowa DNR.

Bob completed a pilot year effort on Upper Iowa River bluffs in 1997 with 4 eyases successfully fledged from the cliff area. In spring 1998, National Park Service Ranger Rodney Rovang accompanied Bob and the Raptor Resource Project's John Dingley and Dave Kester to construct a release (hack) site, at Hanging Rock in Effigy Mounds National Monument overlooking the Mississippi River. A total of 9 birds were released from the site. Likewise at a quarry cliff adjoining Eagle Point Park, Iowa Falcon Recovery team members Lowell Washburn and Tom Deckert conducted falcon releases with young owls fledgling from the same cliff. Thirty eight eyas falcons were released between 1999 – 2000.

In 2000, for the first time in at least three decades, wild peregrines were produced on Mississippi River cliffs. At Queen's Bluff, in southeastern Minnesota, one young fledged successfully from parents which had been released in Iowa. The male was hacked from Effigy Mounds in 1998 by Bob's Raptor Resource Project and the female was hacked from Mason City in 1998 by Lowell Washburn. Also in 2000, the same pair that nested in 1999 in a nest-box at the Alliant Energy power plant smokestack near Lansing, now nested in a nest-box at a nearby cliff, where peregrines historically nested. They fledged 4 young. It is worth noting that, according to Bud Tordoff co-chair of Midwest Peregrine Falcon Recovery Team, "These were the first young peregrines known to fledge from a cliff nest in the Mississippi River valley since the extirpation of the original population by DDT in the 1950s and 1960s." In all, there were five peregrine pairs at cliff-sites along the Mississippi River.

In 2012, 15 territorial pairs provided 13 successful nests with 34 young produced. In 2013, cliff nesting falcon territories in Iowa includes 15 nesting pairs. Our volunteer falcon partners have noted pairs in Cedar Rapids (Theresa Chapel, US Bank), Des Moines, (Bob Hoehle, American Republic Bldg and State Capitol bldg.), 3 cliff pairs in Allamakee Co. (Bob Anderson), MacGregor (Bob Anderson, Bunge America Elevator), Dubuque (Roger Scholberg, Wisconsin Bridge), Clinton (Kent Long, ADM Plant and Kurt Hubbart, ML Kapp Power Plant), Quad Cities (I80 Bridge and Dave Sebben, MidAmerican energy HQ), Louisa (Jim Haack, MidAmerican Energy), Burlington (Ray Conn, Great River Bridge), and Chillicothe (Judi Johnson, Alliant Energy). All are valued volunteers, and corporations and can be justly proud of what has occurred in Iowa's nesting Peregrine Falcons the last 20 years. **Thank You!** *- Pat Schlarbaum, WDP Technician*

Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas—Thanks for Your Help!

Trumpeter Swans and cygnets.

The field work for Iowa's second Breeding Bird Atlas ended last fall and the process of tabulating the results of that effort is well underway. Species accounts are now being written for a publication to share knowledge gained about Iowa's breeding birds. On behalf of the Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Program, I wish to thank the 156 people who collected and entered field data for the atlas, and I extend that thanks to the many other helpers in the field who contributed. In the end, nearly 152,000 field records were gathered, and 10,624 hours were spent by bird atlasers in the field. Data were collected for 196 species, and 167 of these species were confirmed nesting in at least one of the 791 blocks in the state.

As the data collected from the first atlas is compared with data collected from the second atlas, some changes are apparent. For instance, Trumpeter Swan, Sandhill Crane, Red-necked Grebe, and Eared Grebe were not confirmed nesting in Iowa during the first Breeding Bird Atlas, but all four of these wetland associated species were found nesting during the second atlas. Trumpeter Swans, in fact, were found nesting in 47 different blocks, while Sandhill Cranes were documented nesting in 19 blocks. Many thousands of acres of wetland habitat have been restored during the last twenty years, especially in the Prairie Pothole Region of north-central Iowa. It is likely all four of these wetland species just mentioned, plus many others, benefitted from this habitat restoration effort.

If we look at how Iowa's grassland associated species have fared over time, a few species appear to be doing well, while others are not. For instance, Iowa's state threatened Henslow's Sparrow has benefitted from the Federal Farm Program's Conservation Reserve Program, which, at one time, set-aside (from crop production) 2.2 million acres of Iowa grassland. Henslow's Sparrow was found in just 7 blocks during the first atlas, while it was found in 222 blocks during the second atlas. Another species that has benefitted from grassland CRP is the Sedge Wren, found in 166 blocks during the first atlas and 581 blocks during the second one. Among those grassland species that are not faring well are Northern Bobwhite and Loggerhead Shrike. Northern Bobwhite was confirmed nesting in 126 blocks throughout most of the state in the first atlas, while it was confirmed nesting in just 17 blocks during the second atlas, mostly in extreme southern Iowa where some adequate habitat still exists. Loggerhead Shrike, which shares habitat with the bobwhite, was found in 185 blocks in the first atlas and just 59 blocks in the second atlas.

Killdeer chick
Photo by Jeremy Rappaport, MSIM Crew 2013

In spite of continued loss and fragmentation of Iowa's remaining habitats, the majority of Iowa's breeding bird populations seem to be holding their own, at least on public land. Forest birds, in particular, seem to be faring best. A species that exemplifies this well is Bald Eagle. During the first atlas, this species was found nesting in just 3 blocks. During the second atlas, the Bald Eagle was confirmed nesting in 123 blocks.

Once again, thanks to all who have contributed time and effort to Iowa's Breeding Bird Atlas! We shall try to keep you updated on progress toward publication of a book. In the meantime, keep enjoying the presence and songs of our feathered relatives!

- Bruce Ehresman, WDP Biologist

Last Look

This Central Newt was found in April by one of the MSIM crews. Central Newts are a subspecies of Eastern Newts. The Latin name is *Notophthalmus viridescens louisianensis*. During the terrestrial stage for this salamander, they live on land in wooded areas around ponds. Most mammals and birds find newts to be unpalatable, and they can be toxic to predators.

Photos by Jordan Lindaman, ISU MSIM Crew 2013.

Events Calendar

Falcon & Osprey Banding
June & July
Information on specific dates and times will be available at www.iowadnr.gov

Sedan Bottoms BCA Dedication
June TBD
Information on specific dates and times will be available at www.iowadnr.gov

Iowa Prairie Conference
July 18-20, Luther College, Decorah, IA
http://www.luther.edu/iowaprairieconference/

MW Partners in Amphibian & Reptile Conservation Annual Meeting
August 2-4, Mequon, WI
http://www.mwparc.org/

Iowa State Fair
Aug. 8-18, Des Moines, IA

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